



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last week we wrapped up what I thought was one of our best Governor's Conference on Tourism events. Thank you to all of those who were able to join us at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa this year. More than 600 tourism professionals attended the event, which is a new record for us! It was great to network with so many of our colleagues and learn about the latest trends in the tourism industry. We had such positive feedback about the breakout sessions and know that many of you left the conference with tremendously valuable information that you will be able to use.

I also want to congratulate the winners of both the STARs awards during the STARs gala on Wednesday night and the Governor's Tourism Award winners on Thursday afternoon. All the winners deserved the recognition for all their hard work and dedication to the tourism industry.

I especially want to thank our conference partners, Debbie Johnson of the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association, Steve Chucuri of the Arizona Restaurant and Hospitality Association and Karen Churchard of the Arizona Tourism Alliance for the tremendous job that they did on the conference.

Have a great week.

Margie R. Emmert

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Congratulates Governor's Tourism Award Winners

Last week tourism professionals were honored at the Governor's Conference on Tourism. AOT Director Margie Emmermann and Deputy Director Kelly Paisley presented the awards during the Governor's Awards Luncheon with more than 600 tourism industry members in attendance.

Awards were presented in the following categories: Innovative Promotions, Cooperative Marketing, Special Events (Rural and Urban) and Arizona Preservation. AOT also honored individual achievements in the categories of Tourism Champion of the Year, Tourism Hall of Fame, Spirit of Service and Lifetime Achievement. Seventy-five nominations were submitted for the nine award categories. Winners were selected on general evaluation of qualifications such as exceptional efforts, innovation, uniqueness and measurable results. The judging committee was comprised of a selection of tourism industry representatives from around the state and AOT staff. Winners are listed below:

- Innovative Promotions – **Alliance for Audience**
- Cooperative Marketing – **Southeastern Arizona Birding Trail**
- Arizona Preservation – **Digging In: Bisbee's Mineral Heritage Exhibition**
- Special Events – Rural – **Border to Border Air Show**
- Special Events – Urban – Tie – **Arizona State Parks 50th Anniversary Celebration AND Fiesta Bowl Festival of College Football**
- Spirit of Service – **Khalik Hussein, Loews Ventana Canyon Resort**
- Tourism Champion of the Year – **Bruce Lange, The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa**
- Tourism Hall of Fame – **Win Holden, Arizona Highways**
- Lifetime Achievement Award – **Marshall Trimble, Arizona's State Historian**

AOT Welcomes New Staff Member

Robin Jackalone has joined the AOT staff as the new Fulfillment Manager. She will manage all fulfillment activities for AOT such as bulk and consumer fulfillment, call center operations, fulfillment services, data entry, and inventory control. Robin will also serve as the project manager for some of AOT's publications and collateral material including the Official State Visitor's Guide and Map and the Professional Travel Planners Guide. She has previously worked for Nintendo of America in Redmond, Washington, where she managed the materials planning required to package their games for retail sale. Robin can be contacted at 602-364-3712 or via e-mail at rjackalone@azot.gov.

Industry News

U.S. Cities Investing in China Tourism

The fact that Chinese nationals cannot obtain tourist visas to the U.S. has not discouraged aggressive U.S. destinations from striking tourism marketing deals with the government of China. NYC & Co., the tourism marketing arm of New York City, is the latest to invest in China, recently opening a new office in Shanghai, along with offices in Tokyo and Seoul, South Korea. The tourism industry is chomping at the bit to capitalize on the 100 million Chinese travelers expected to visit the U.S. by 2020, a number provided by the UN World Travel Organization.

Officially, however, since the U.S. does not have "approved-destination status" from China, it does not have permission to open tourism offices, run promotional travel ads or market group tours in China. Nevertheless, New York, Nevada, Hawaii, Los Angeles and San Francisco have cut deals to establish offices there and promote their destinations. Nevada, Hawaii and Los Angeles are fully licensed to advertise in China, while San Francisco and New York, through industry representatives in China, can work with local travel agencies and providers. (*Travel Weekly.com*)

Proposal Would Triple Payouts to Bumped Flyers

Uncle Sam may require airlines to more than triple the cash they will have to fork over to passengers who are involuntarily bumped from flights. The Department of Transportation proposed changes to its bumping rules Monday that could boost compensation up to \$1,248 for passengers who are severely delayed after losing their seats. It would be the first payment increase since 1978. The DOT is asking for public comment on the proposed change. The agency is also asking for public comment on whether the compensation requirements, which currently apply only for aircraft with 60 seats or more, also should apply to aircraft with 31 to 60 seats. Comments on the department's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking are due in 60 days. (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution.com/Business; Travel Weekly.com*)

Americans Leave Green Behind When Checking Into Hotels

Do Americans act environmentally when they visit hotels? No, they check that concern at the door, according to a survey released by Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

For example:

- Most of those polled said they are less likely to conserve water and electricity while they are away from home.
- More than 6-in-10 said they were using more because they knew it would be free.
- Nearly 70 percent of respondents said they open a new mini-bottle of shampoo each time they shower at a hotel.
- Almost two-thirds said they were more likely to leave the lights on at a hotel than at home.
- Three out of four hotel guests believe it is important to have their sheets and towels changed each day – "an environmentally unfriendly habit few practice at home," commented Starwood.

ELEMENT Hotels, a new extended-stay brand from the White Plains-based Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., commissioned research firm STUDYLOGIC to conduct the telephone survey. (*Report by David Wilkenin, TravelMole e-Newsletter*)

More Than Half of Adults Plan Summer Vacation

Just over half (54 percent) of U.S. adults have taken or plan to take a summer vacation this year, according to a Harris Interactive poll. The older generation (those age 62 and older), are least likely to take a vacation, especially when compared to Baby Boomers (those 43 to 61). Four in 10 Matures (42 percent) will not take a vacation this summer, versus 34 percent of Baby Boomers. One in two adults will be traveling internationally. A majority of those taking a vacation this summer (51 percent) will be visiting friends and family. (*Modern Agent.com*)